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SUBJECT: Post Gets Clarification of Sweden's Post COP-15 Public
Statements: Real Problem is China

REF: STOCKHOLM 791

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Charge called Prime Minister Reinfeldt's climate change advisor Lars Erik Liljelund to discuss recent public criticism of the United States by Sweden's Environment Minister Andreas Carlgren. Liljelund agreed it was wrong to criticize U.S. efforts at Copenhagen, noting that the need was for a strategy to bring China into serious discussions. He said China had been "powerful" at COP-15, as well as very "frank and direct that it was not interested in any type of climate change commitment." Liljelund told Charge he would follow up with Carlgren in the New Year, as he had done in August. End Summary

Sweden's Environment Minister Criticizes the U.S.

¶2. (U) Per reftel, the Swedish media was generally positive toward President Obama's efforts at COP-15, although the U.S. was criticized for not having any new mitigation targets to put on the table. The Swedish media reserved much of their criticism for the EU, which they said was left on the sidelines as the U.S. and China took over the negotiations.

¶3. (U) Sweden's Environment Minister Andreas Carlgren responded to such criticism during the last significant event of Sweden's six month EU Presidency, the December 22 meeting of EU Environment Ministers held in Brussels. After chairing the meeting, he told a press conference that the EU ministers placed a lot of the blame for the failure on the inability of the world's two biggest emitters, the United States and China, to agree at the climate summit. He said COP-15 was a "great failure" and "It was obvious that the United States and China didn't want more than we achieved at Copenhagen. As he arrived for the Brussels meeting, Carlgren had told the press that the COP-15 outcome "was mostly for the big ones, for the US and for China and their followers" agreeing on "the lowest common denominator."

¶4. (U) While Carlgren did criticize China as well as the United States, he repeated his near-constant mantra on the need to pressure the U.S. to do more on climate change. At the post-Ministerial press conference, Carlgren said the pressure is now on the United States, and "We should be able to expect them to deliver something concrete later this spring." Carlgren was joined in criticizing the U.S. by Spain's Environment Minister Teresa Ribera who was quoted in the Swedish press as calling on President Obama "to live up to" his claim for a key role on climate by "presenting concrete numbers" adding that "we cannot give up, we must fight for what we sadly enough did not achieve in Copenhagen."

¶5. (U) While some EU member countries have suggested imposing a carbon tax on recalcitrant emitters, Carlgren told the press that "This is not the time for that. We must strive for a global agreement and then we should avoid too much sable-rattling."

Prime Minister's Climate Change Advisor Recommends a Strategy to Get
China to Commit

¶16. (SBU) On December 23, Charge called Prime Minister Frederik Reinfeldt's Senior Advisor on Climate Change Lars-Erik Liljelund to see whether Carlgren's criticism reflected the Swedish government view. Liljelund had not seen Carlgren's remarks, but agreed that it was not right to criticize the United States. He said he had been in meetings with the EU at COP-15 where China "showed how powerful it is." As an example, he recounted how when German Chancellor Angela Merkel asked China's Vice Foreign Minister whether China could at least say China would reduce emissions, the Vice Foreign Minister's response was simply, "No." Liljelund also attended a meeting where he witnessed an "open dispute" between China and the G-77.

¶17. (SBU) Liljelund said that the US and EU both have the same problem: China was "really polite" during COP-15, but also "very frank and direct that they were not interested in any type of climate change commitment." Liljelund concluded that the US and EU need a "joint strategy to bring China in."

¶18. (SBU) Liljelund reminded the Charge that in August after Carlgren's public criticism of the United States following EU meetings in Washington, Liljelund had talked with Carlgren to reign him in. He promised to follow up with Carlgren after the New Year.

SILVERMAN